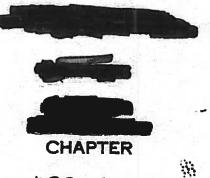
## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY, A.D. 1996

JT COMM. LEGISLATIVE SERVICES LAW REVISION OFFICE

**26-180** 

AN ACT

## **RELATING TO 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS**

96-S 2322

introduced By: Senators Gorham, Porter and Blais

Date Introduced: January 18, 1996

Referred To: Senate Committee on

**Judiciary** 

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

- SECTION 1. Chapter 39-21.1 of the general laws is hereby amended by
- 2 adding the following section thereto:
- 3 39-21.1-17. Confidentiality of calls. -- All telephone calls and telephone
- 4 call transmissions received pursuant to this chapter and all tapes containing
- 5 records of telephone calls shall remain confidential and used only for the
- 6 purpose of handling emergency calls and for public safety purposes as may be
- 7 needed for law enforcement, fire, medical, rescue or other emergency services.
  - Such calls shall not be released to any other parties without the written consent

of the person-whose voice is recorded, or upon order of court.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.



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# EXPLANATION

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# AN ACT

## **RELATING TO EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS**

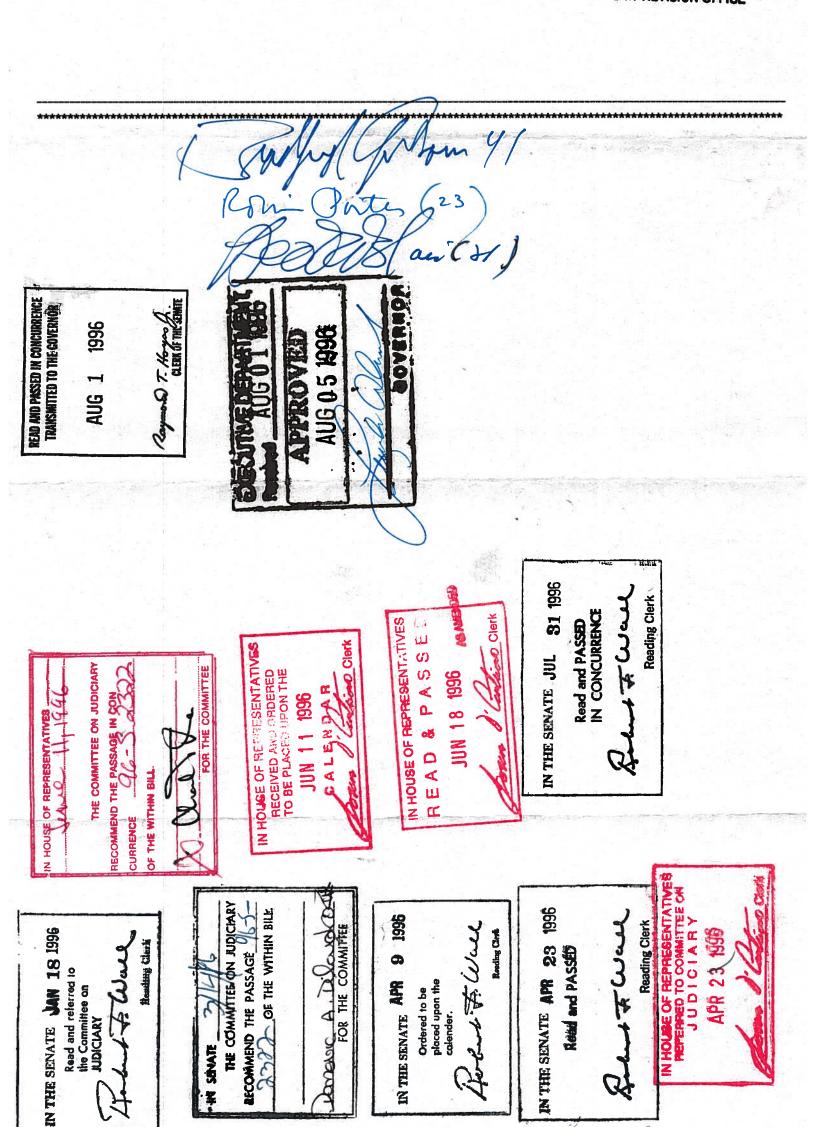
- This act would provide for the confidentiality of taped 911 emergency
- 2 telephone calls.

AN ACT

PUBLIC LAWS CHAPTER

**496-**180

RELATING TO 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS
JT COMM. LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
LAW REVISION OFFICE



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A SEVATE



# State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196 401-277-2080

LINCOLN ALMOND
GOVERNOR

August 5, 1996

## TO THE HONORABLE, THE SENATE:

I am transmitting to the Secretary of State, with my signature, 96-S-2322, as amended, "An Act Relating to 911 Emergency Telephone Calls."

This Act prohibits the public disclosure of telephone calls made to the State 911 system absent the written consent of the caller or an order of the court.

I support this legislation. By providing confidentiality for 911 calls, this Act serves to protect 911 callers from unwanted invasions of privacy and potential public embarrassment. Such protections reasonably can be expected to enhance the use of this important emergency telephone system by removing reservations by some individuals to make 911 calls.

Opponents have expressed concern that this legislation may limit accountability of the 911 authority to the public. I believe, however, that this legislation provides safeguards sufficient to ensure such accountability. Since the protection from disclosure applies only to the substance of the call and the identity of the caller, information could be made available as to the number of calls received by the 911 system and the timeliness of actions taken by the system in response. Individual callers to 911 who believe that their calls are not being handled appropriately can give permission to release the substance of the call for public review. In addition, those third parties, including governmental agencies, who have concerns about the operation of 911 can bring a legal action seeking to obtain a court order for release of appropriate information. These safeguards adequately protect the public's interest in and oversight of the operation of 911.

With this message, I sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

Lincoln Almond



# State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations State House Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196 401-277-2080

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